

observed. The following authorities can not be questioned.

The words of a law are generally to be understood in their usual and most known signification, not so much regarding the propriety of grammar, as their general and popular use.—Blackstone.

The terms of every written document are to be understood in their plain, ordinary and popular sense.—Greenleaf.

The fundamental law of interpretation of all writings, sacred and profane, is that words are to be understood in their historical sense in which it can be historically proved that they were used by their author and intended to be understood by those to whom they were addressed.—Dr. Hodge.

Ascertain the *usus loquendi*, or notion affixed to a word by the persons in general by whom the language either is now or formerly was spoken, and especially in the particular connection in which such notion is affixed.—T. H. Horne.

Every text of Scripture, as every passage from any other writing, has but one true sense. In order to determine what that true sense of a text is we investigate the sacred writing in precisely the same manner as we would the writing of any other ancient author.

No one has the right to abandon the received signification of a word as used by a writer of any age and substitute an arbitrary meaning for it.

If these rules of interpretation are not true, or not observed in our investigation of language as employed in the past or present, then there is an end of the communication of ideas between man and man; for truth itself is no longer expressible when words once are the mere playthings of capricious interpreters.

#### GREEK LITERATURE.

Certainly the meaning of the word *baptizo* can be determined from its usage by the best writers. What does the word mean in Greek Literature? I have before me numerous quotations from literature where the word is used. The context in every instance determines the meaning of the word to be that expressed in its ground-idea, to put in or under a penetrable substance. For want of space I can do no better than to quote from the learned Dr. Conant. This author made an exhaustive examination of the word under consideration. He examined the lexical and grammatical use of the word by the study of examples "drawn from writers in almost every department of literature and science; from poets, rhetoricians, philosophers, critics, historians, geographers; from writers on husbandry, on medicine, on natural history, on grammar, on theology; from almost every form and style of composition—romances, epistles, orations, fables, odes, epigrams, sermons, narratives; from writers of various nations and religions, Pagan, Jew and Christian, belonging to many

different countries and thro a long succession of ages."

After this extended investigation the author says:

The ground-idea expressed by this word is to put into or under water (or other penetrable substance,) so as entirely to immerse or submerge; that this act is always expressed in the literal application of the word, and is the basis of its metaphorical uses. This ground-idea is expressed in English, in the various connections where the word occurs by the terms (synonymous in this ground-element) to immerse, immerge, submerge, to dip, to plunge, to imbathe, to whelm.

The word has retained its ground idea without change. From the earliest age of Greek Literature down to its close (a period of about two thousand years,) not an example has been found in which the word has any other meaning. There is no instance in which it signifies to make a partial application of water by affusion or sprinkling, or to cleanse, to purify, apart from the literal act of immersion as the means of cleansing or purifying.

A reference to the facts here mentioned ought to convince the most doubting mind as to the classic and historic meaning and use of the word *baptizo*. Covering a period of two thousand years, from 1500 B. C. to 500 A. D., we find the the same unchanging meaning of the word. It would be passing strange, unreasonable even to suppose that Christ, and the apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, would employ a word contrary to the common usage and meaning of it.

I do not believe that He or they did so use the word *baptizo*. I believe that immersion, the meaning of this Greek verb in literature, is also the meaning of it in the sacred Scriptures.

#### GREEK LEXICONS.

Let us take a glance at the testimony of scholars who have given us our Greek Lexicons. These men simply give the meaning of the word they define as usage may determine for the particular time the word is used. The original, primitive and uniformly the true ground-idea of a word must not be confounded with its derived meanings or applications growing out of it centuries after its use in a living language.

Here are the definitions of the word *baptizo* as given by six of the best English and German lexicographers:

1. Liddell & Scott.—To dip in or under water. (Note, an American edition published by Harper & Bros. 1846 defines the word thus,—to dip repeatedly.)
2. Sophocles.—To dip, to immerse, to sink.
3. Robinson.—To immerse, to sink,—a frequentative.
4. Stephanus.—Mergo, to immerse.
5. Schleusner.—Mergo, to dip in, Hebrew *tabal*.
6. Rost & Palm.—Untertauchen, to dip in.

Here are definitions as given by three unimpeachable witnesses and men of scholarship. They define the word from

the standpoint of New Testament Greek.

1. Thayer's Greek—English Lexicon of the New Testament: "*Baptizo*, I. 1. prop. To dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge. 2. To cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water; in the mid. and 1 aor. pass. to wash one's self, to bathe. 3. metaph. To overwhelm, to be overwhelmed with calamities. II. In the New Testament it is used particularly of the rite of sacred ablution, first instituted by John the Baptist, afterward, by Christ's command, received by Christians, and adjusted to the contents and nature of their religion, viz., an immersion in water, etc.

2. Cremer's Biblico-Theological lexicon of the New Testament Greek: "*Bapizo*, to immerse, to submerge. The peculiar New Testament and Christian use of the word to denote immersion, submersion for a religious purpose—to baptize, may be pretty clearly traced back to the Levitical washing."

3. Green's Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament: *Baptizo*, 1. primary, to dip, immerse.

Here are a few more definitions as given by Lexicographers and scholars:

1. Donegan.—To immerse.
  2. Parkhurst.—To dip, immerse or plunge in water.
  3. Schrevelius.—To immerse.
  4. Wright.—Dip, plunge, immerse.
  5. Leigh.—The native and proper signification to dip in water.
  6. Thayer.—"As the meaning of *baptizo*, all reputable lexicographers are now agreed that its primary meaning is 'to immerse,' etc."
  7. Prof. Humphreys of the University of Va.—"There is no standard Greek-English lexicon that gives sprinkle or pour as meanings of *baptizo*."
  8. Prof. Tyler of Amherst College.—"I do not know of any good lexicon which gives sprinkle as a rendering of *baptizo*."
  9. Prof. D'Ooge of Colby University.—"There is no standard Greek-English lexicon that gives either sprinkle or pour as one of the meanings of the Greek verb *baptizo*."
  10. Prof. Flagg of Cornell University.—"I know of no lexicon which gives the meaning you speak of (sprinkle or pour) for *baptizo*, not even the lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods of Prof. E. A. Sophocles."
  11. Alexander de Stourdza.—"The verb baptize, immergo, has, in fact, but one sole acceptance. It signifies literally and always, to plunge. Baptism and immersion are therefore, identical."
  12. Prof. Timayenis.—The Greek word *baptizo* means nothing but immerse in water. Baptism means nothing but immersion.
  13. Dr. Kyriasko of the University of Athens.—"The verb *baptizo*, in the Greek language, never has the meaning of to pour or to sprinkle, but invariably that of to dip."
  14. Dr. Adolph Harnack, one of Germany's greatest scholars.—"*Baptizein* undoubtedly signifies immersion (*eintauchens*.) No proof can be found that it signifies anything else in the New Testament and in the most ancient Christian literature."
  15. Prof. Delitzsch of Leipzig when asked the meaning of the Hebrew verb *tabhal*, replied: It signifies to immerse the same as *baptizein*.
- But I must stop here. If any argument can be drawn from the critical scholarship of the world as to what the word means it is this—that their universal testimony is that the word *baptizo* means pri-